

REMARKS/COMMENTS

Claims 1-3 and new Claims 4-6 are active in the case. Reconsideration is respectfully requested.

The present invention relates to an apparatus and a method for producing hydroxyalkyl(meth)acrylate.

Claim Objection and Rejection, 35 USC 112

The objection to and rejection of Claim 3 are believed to have been obviated by the amendment made to the claim which places the claim in conventional method claim format. Entry of the amendment is respectfully requested.

Claim Amendments

New Claims 4-6 are supported by the original claims, Figures 1 and 2 and by the discussion of the text on page 5. Entry of the new claims into the record is respectfully requested.

Prior Art Rejection

Claims 1 and 2 stand rejected based on 35 USC 102(b) as anticipated by Soderberg, U. S. Patent 4,449,544. This ground of rejection is respectfully traversed.

It is clear that the Soderberg patent discloses a blowdown valve that is configured as a ball valve that is positioned within a conduit which permits the discharge of material therethrough. However, the apparatus in which the blowdown valve is positioned is a conduit which is a part of the steam boiler/turbine generator of an electrical utility. The purpose of the blowdown valve, configured as a ball valve, is to permit the cleaning of the interior of the

conduit as steam is blown therethrough so that any and all undesired objects in the conduit may be blown out of the system unimpeded. In other words, the use of the ball valve provides for the unimpeded cleansing of the conduit system that is in communication with the boiler apparatus of the utility.

It is evident from the discussion above that the cited patent does not at all pertain to the production of an organic product whatever, and certainly not a hydroxyalkyl(meth)acrylate. There is no teaching or suggestion of a reaction vessel, which confines the reactants for the production of a hydroxyalkyl(meth)acrylate, that is provided with a conduit that, in turn, contains a ball valve as a blowdown valve through which the hydroxyalkyl(meth)acrylate product is discharged from the reaction system. Although the patent discloses a conduit, that contains a blowdown valve, through which elevated pressure steam is blown in order to clear the conduit system of foreign matter, applicants submit that one of skill in the art would not be led to modify a reaction vessel in which hydroxyalkyl(meth)acrylate is produced so that not only is the desired ester product discharged from the reactor, but also such other material as polymer residue that is formed by polymerization of some of the (meth)acrylic acid. Accordingly, it is submitted that the patent does not anticipate the invention as claimed as it is directed to a reaction vessel for the production of an organic product that is in communication with a conduit that contains a ball valve as a blowdown valve. Withdrawal of the rejection is therefore respectfully requested.

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It is now believed that the application is in proper condition for allowance. Early notice to this effect is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "FD Vastine".

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